A REVIEW OF THE STATE OF THE BRITISH NATION.

Tuesday, March 1. 1709.

I Have been talking of letting in Foreigners among us, in order to increase the Numbers of these strange two legg'd, unfeather'd Animals, call'd *True-Born-Englishmen*; That heterogeneous, unnatural Monster, that is alone distinguish'd from all the World by this, that he is against propogating his own Kind; the mighty Word spoken at first by him, whose Words were Causes, and commanded Effects; the mighty Word spoken by him, to whom to command, to do, and to cause to be done, is all one; that mighty Word, when it said to all the World, *encrease* and *multiply*, it form'd a Propensity in the whole Creation to perform it; one Sex profess to own that Propensity, and the other Sex, tho' Custom has interpos'd, that unnatural Vertue Modesty, to pretend a Resistance, yet has Compliance formed upon even that Refusal it self, and upon every Circumstance consenting to it.

The Brutes of all Kinds obey this great Law, all the Plants and Fruits of the Earth assent to it, Times and Seasons, all the Ebbs and Fluxes in the Sea of Nature consent; Propagation of Kind is a standing Law, encrease and multiply is a Word given from Heaven, and the whole Earth obeys, except as before excepted; But this *True-Born-Englishman*, a meer Non-Natural, a Thing born by Transplantation, a promiscuous Birth, hates his own Original, and abhors the Encrease.

But

But now let us examine, who are they that object againſt the receiving of Foreigners here, and naturalizing them; They are, generally ſpeaking, 1. Our Tradeſmen, Artificers and Manufacturers. 2. Our Corporation-Men. As to Corporation-Tyranny, I take it to be one of the greateſt Enemies to Trade, the greateſt Diſcouragement of Induſtry, the greateſt Badge of voluntary Captivity that we have left in the Nation, and it would take up a whole Volume to expoſe it, as it deſerves.

That ſuch a Tradeſman, ſuch a Handicraft Man, ſuch a Shop-keeper ſhall not open Shop in this Town, or in this City or Corporation, becauſe he has not ſerv'd ſeven Years to it, and been made free; every Corporation is an excluſive Company upon Trade, and ſome People are mighty fond of exclaiming againſt ſuch a Things; now is it not very odd to hear Mr. M—r and his Blunderbuſſes, I ſhould ſay his Aldermen, talk of Liberty and Property, and the mighty Weight of a Freeholder?—I am a Freeholder in a County, and from me, *that is*, from my Anceſtors, and that *by Grant* of meer Grace and Good-Will, all theſe Corporations obtain'd their excluſive Privileges, and yet if I have a Mind to ſet up a Trade in this Town, I ſhall not be admitted, becauſe I am no Freeman; where's the Conſiſtency of this, with what you call *Engliſh* Freedom? — But farther, where's the Conſiſteney of this, with the Proſperity of Trade? How has it check'd the Encreaſe of Towns, and the Confluence of People to the Capital Cities of the Nation? —Let any Man enquire of the Inhabitants of *Briſtol*, and aſk them, how much larger had that City been than now it is, would they have open'd this Barrier, and taken off the Reſtraint of their excluſive Authority, of which this is a remarkable Proof; that at *one Gate*, where the Liberties of that City do not extend far beyond the Gate, the Buildings encreaſe, the Ground-Rents are dear, and Inhabitants come every Day to ſettle; at all the other Gates, there is no Sign of it, Privileges depopulate, and the Towns decay, meerly becauſe the Inhabitants will not let them encreaſe: The rich Trading Towns in the *North*, ſuch as *Manchester*, and *Rochdale*, *Sheffield*, *Wakefield*, *Gainsbro'*, and the like, where they have no Corporation, and conſequently none of this Miſchief, do they not encreaſe, grow wealthy and populous, and thrive as faſt as any Places in *England*, and ſome of them have (as they ſay) more People than the City of *York*? —To what Purpoſe then is the Pageantry of Bodies Politick? Where are the Advantages? And what is the Uſe of them?

And after all, why are the Corporations againſt this Naturalizing Bill? It gives them no Uneaſineſs or Diſturbance; for naturalizing a Foreigner, makes him indeed an *Engliſh* Man, but makes him free of no Corporation, nor can he ſet up a Trade by Vertue of his Naturalization, in any Place where he could not have ſet up a Trade before; ſo that the Corporations are not concern'd in it; and 'tis plain, the City of *London*, tho' they would perhaps be againſt it, if they could; yet foreſeeing that it would not affect any of their Privileges, they pointed the Complaint againſt their Loſs of Money, not their Want of Power; which Loſs if it be made good, they acquieſce readily, and well they may.

Of

Of the Caſe of Inſolvents in England.

IT may be wonder'd, why I have laid this Caſe by ſo long, while ſo many miſerable People are imploring Relief from the Clemency and Compaſſion of the Parliament——— Indeed I have not ſo laid it by as to neglect them, but I foreſaw their Cauſe not haſty in coming on, and even when it ſhall come on; I cannot ſay, I find that Diſpoſition for a publick Pity, as I wiſh was in general planted in the Minds of the People.

England will for ever be voted to be the moſt merciful Nation under Heaven in every other Caſe, and methinks 'tis hard, She ſhould be the moſt cruel in Caſe of Debtors; we pity Thieves and Murtherers, and perhaps too often bear with their Crimes, tho' wilful and deſtructive; while we ſhew no Compaſſion to Debtors, tho' their Crime may be perfectly caſual and inevitable.

To look a little into the Particulars, I cannot but think, it would be a very moving Thing to repreſent to the Conſideration of our Legiſlators, the preſent horrid Proſpect of the Inſolvents in this Kingdom, upon which ſome needful Reflections might very well be made; and this would be the firſt, *viz.* That ſince it is not thus in any Nation in the World but ours, there muſt certainly be among us ſome great Miſtake about this Matter, and that we are moſt aſſuredly in the Wrong in our Management of theſe People; and this Proſpect will produce the following Heads, if ſome, that pretend to be very accurate in their Calculations, are not very much miſtaken.

(Viz.) That there are in this Kingdom of the ſeveral Kinds of Inſolvents, and great Part of whom we may in Charity believe would be very glad to ſurrender their Effects to their Creditors, a moſt prodigious Number, and which may be divided, as follows.

(Viz.) Bankrupt Tradeſmen and Inſolvent Debtors; as well Priſoners at large as cloſe Priſoners; Shelterers in privileg'd Places, and ſuch as abſcond from their Creditors, of all which Kinds, they ſay, there are above 80000, moſt of whom have Families, Wives, and Children innumerable, whoſe Miſeries and Diſaſters are deriv'd from the other, and depending upon them, *and who are*, while the other are in their Diſaſters and Diſtreſſes, whether in Priſon or out, actually either ſtarving and languiſhing, in Want and Neceſſity, and living on the cold Charity of Friends, or eating and deſtroying the Eſtates of their Creditors.

Of theſe are to be reckon'd;

1. Priſoners at large, under the expenſive Licence, and precarious, dear-bought Liberty of Goalors and Keepers of Priſons, above 40000.
2. Shelterers, and ſuch as lurk in the Rules, Verges, and allow'd Privileges of Priſons, Palaces, Houſes of the Nobility, or under Protections and Liſtings of Soldiers, *&c.* and ſuch new-faſhion'd Shifts, as place them a little out of the Reach of the Law, about 20000.
3. Abſconders, who conceal themſelves in private Retreats in their Own or Friends Houſes, that live as it were, out of Sight of Danger, and under the conſtant Terror of Arreſts, Eſcape-Warrants, and the Fury and Proſecution of inexorable Creditors, at leaſt 10000.
4. Baniſhed Perſons, who being made deſperate by the Cruelty of Creditors, the Severity of the late Acts for Bankrupts Surrenders, terrify'd with Eſcape-Warrants, and the Dread of perpetual Impriſonment, are fled out of the Kingdom, ſome with, ſome without their Families, and all with what Eſtate they can ſecure; by which they help both to depopulate and impoveriſh the Country, and are a ſtrong Motive to preſs us to that moſt ne-